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THE CEA CRITIC

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The Scholar and the Ballad Singer

We are familiar with the contribution scholars have made in popularizing the poetic ballad: how Bishop Percy, Walter Scott, and other early antiquarians initiated the fashion of enjoying balladry in a bookish way, and how their attitude was gradually assimilated by the learned world until it became fairly characteristic. In our own century, however, the old literary attitude has been jarred more and more out of complacency as students of folksong have become increasingly aware of the beauty and cultural importance of traditional music, the music out of which every ballad text has, at one time or another, been taken. To top it off, during recent years events have been happening in American music which, in their literary connections, give special cause for attentive thought. We are confronted today with a new configuration of actualities in the face of which scholars and students are naturally manifesting some signs of confusion. How *is* a ballad to be regarded in our time? Academically speaking, should we study it as a poem or as a song? Or should we do both? The following brief sketch is an effort to answer these questions and to bring the contemporary ballad picture roughly into focus.

On the extreme right, to start with, are the reactionaries who refuse to part company with the time-honored literary notion--the "Child ballad" point of view. For them a ballad is not a musical performance. It is a printed poem meant to be read or recited as verse, in the same manner as one would read "The Charge of the Light Brigade." Musically-minded scholars of our generation have tried hard to combat this view, and with considerable success. They argue that the mere verbal text is by no means the true ballad, being analagous rather to a fossil relic; that the native beauty and peculiar charm of traditional balladry can never be appreciated apart from its music. They are, of course, right. No one familiar with balladry in its varied aspects could reasonably disagree with their contention.

Yet, despite the obvious validity of such a claim, the venerable fossils are clearly defensible on their own ground. Certainly it would be a cultural loss if the reading of folk-poetry, old style, were to be generally abandoned as obsolete. Verse abolitionists and depreciators should be reminded, for one thing, that a large and well-preserved corpus of ballad verse exists whose music is irrecoverably lost. Some of Child's paragons have not been equalled in quality among later-recorded variants. *Geordie, Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*, and dozens like them, are strong and handsome poems, as mellow and hard as seasoned oak wood. And their value is, and must continue to be, strictly poetic.

There is no doubt that editors and critics of the past have worked a sore injustice upon ballad music. Its relative merits have not been adequately understood. The genuine tunes, until recently, have not been made accessible, so that for generations readers of musical inclination were not accorded the privilege of exercising an intelligent choice between ballad song and poetry, or, better yet, of enjoying both forms. It was time for a new deal; but the preference for the musical performance is by no means universal, and the bare texts have abundantly earned the right to be regarded as an artistically respectable and thoroughly legitimate, though derivative, form of the ballad.

The resources of ballad poetry, it might be added, have not yet generously been tapped. In Child's thesaurus alone, the range of high-grade texts is actually much larger than anyone would suppose from the anthological repetition of a restricted favorite group well represented by such undeniably beautiful specimens as *Edward, Sir Patrick Spence*, and *Lord Randall*. It does not seem to be realized that the pages of more recent British and American collections, too, hold an attractive inventory of texts, many of them comparable to Child's in poetic worth, and likely to offer in addition an easier vocabulary along with more accurate authenticity. Some excellent British ones, like *Bruton Town* and *Early, Early in the Spring*, are not represented in the Child volumes.

It is well understood that scholars are primarily responsible for making the poetic ballad what it is today in popular esteem. What is not generally realized is the extent of their responsibility likewise for the current popularity of musical presentation, and on all levels. Repercussions range all the way from the graduate seminar to the juke-box. The availability of this music, as well as the recognition of its value, must largely be regarded as the result of learned enterprise in which, strange as it may seem, English teachers of all ranks and descriptions have played an indispensable role. Professors Kittredge and Wendell of Harvard, Gordon Gerould of Princeton, Alphonso Smith and A. K. Davis of Virginia, J. H. Cox of West Virginia, Reed Smith of South Carolina, Frank Dobie and John Lomax of Texas—this is a partial list even among prominent names, but it will serve as an index from which can be gathered by implication some notion of the scale on which this effort has been moving forward. A great deal has been accomplished, needless to say, by inconspicuous teachers who love folk music and are willing to share their experiences with students. Much more can be done in this way, and needs to be done. The tendency of conservative teachers to shy away from musical ballads is logically just as unrealistic as the opposite impulse to write off ballad poetry as a musty museum of dessicated skeletons. What we need, rather, is balance and catholicity. By and large, ballad melody does not need to apologize to its textual counterpart, nor do American-born songs need to hide their heads in the presence of their better-known Scotch and English cousins.

These remarks may become clearer in the light of what is happening on the larger American musical frontier. Tin Pan Alley, by all indications, has fallen into something of a creative decline; even the juke-boxes are far gone in nostalgic and Western repertories. Meanwhile across the land has swept a great popular interest in traditional music. Square dance and folksong are reaching a currency undreamed of by students and advocates of these ancient arts two decades ago. The double reversal of trends probably adds up to the most significant phenomenon in popular music of our generation. Dozens of authentic collections from various regions of the country have been published, many equipped with excellent critical introductions. Many hundreds of phonographic recordings are available. Ballad singers like Burl Ives have become famous in radio and motion pictures. Well-informed articles have appeared in popular magazines like the *Country Gentleman* and *Holiday*. The concert stage (even austere Carnegie Hall) has become hospitable to the tunes of the sailor and the mountaineer. Folksong themes are being utilized in Broadway shows and have inspired contemporary fine-art music such as Kurt Weill's opera *Down in the Valley*[1]. As a result of exposure to genuine folk-music via stage and mechanical dispersion, people everywhere, on all cultural levels, are acquiring a conception of balladry vaguely similar to that held by collectors or by the folksingers themselves.

* * *

The impetus behind the present folksong movement seems to converge from several directions. Folk-lore societies, often with university connections, have contributed a dynamic share, and considerable academic interest has been aroused by objective scientific studies. The work of field-collectors during the past thirty or forty years has, of course, been a paramount factor. It was Cecil Sharp, an English musical scholar, who in 1917 opened up the abundant resources of the Southern Appalachian mountaineers. Following Sharp's pioneering labors, the 1920's yielded a bumper crop of splendid collections. *British Ballads from Maine, Folksongs of the South, Traditional Ballads of Virginia, On the Trail of Negro Folksong, and South Carolina Ballads* are fair samples of this vintage, and numerous books of comparable quality have appeared since. John and Alan Lomax alone have placed thousands of field recordings in the Library of Congress, whose Division of Music has been rendering an exemplary service. The folksong movement is great and still growing. Scholars have not furnished the seed or the soil, but the rich harvest could not have matured without the stimulus of scholarly pollination. Our contemporary situation, gradual and continuous over many years in building up, does not show the earmarks of a passing fad. It looks like an important cultural movement, one in

Continued on page 5

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The Proof of the Pudding

The New Criticism, as applied to the teaching of literature, has been so vigorously attacked and defended that English teachers are in some danger of losing sight of the chief issue: **how well does the method actually work in the classroom?** Perhaps the most prominent cause of this danger is that not enough distinction is made between the New Criticism as a critical theory and its application, usually in a modified form, in our lectures and discussions. The New Criticism is a tool for the professional critic, and it must be admitted that its use is most effective in the hands of such extremely acute critics as John Crowe Ransom and Kenneth Burke.

It is the academic modifications of this theory that are the real problem for the teacher of English. And the problem, as I have said, has been complicated by howls of rage and agony from conservatives and by yells of triumph from critical liberals. Professors Brooks, Warren, and Wellek have been attacked as if they were a group of bomb-carrying Bolsheviki bent upon blowing the educational edifice to bits, and they have been praised as if they were a set of Nehemiahs all ready to rebuild the temple in the promised land. It is at this moment that it is most necessary to abandon these hysterical diatribes and undertake a calm appraisal of the actual worth of the new critical methods in the classroom.

One great disadvantage in such an appraisal, of course, is that no one teacher can generalize on the basis of his own experience. The appraisal can be made only on the accumulated testimonies of many teachers. Ironically enough, it is easier to attack the theory as theory than to determine how successful the method is in the classrooms of this country. But, if my own experience is any criterion, the teaching attitude derived from the New Criticism can provide enrichment of one's teaching by an increased awareness of literature as literature.

Two very different sorts of literature courses within the range of my own activity can be used as examples. Our course entitled Introduction to Poetry is organized entirely around **Understanding Poetry**, which is the text for the course. Occasional outside readings in other books, such as Housman's **The Name and the Nature of Poetry**, have been required, but since the inclusion of too many points of view tends to confuse rather than to clarify, not very much outside reading in critical theory is assigned. Liberal amounts of reading in Frost, Hardy, and Yeats have been used, but the students are encouraged to base their concept of poetry and its function mainly on the critical statements in **Understanding Poetry.** Discussion and lectures are also entirely concerned with the material presented therein.

Conventional tests have been abandoned, and in their place we use a series of critical papers written in class and based upon the questions and problems that are found in the text. The student's standing in the course, then, depends entirely upon the intelligence with which he comprehends the class discussions. For example, a student who has merely learned to define the difference between an iamb and an anapest has not by that very fact learned anything about poetry, but if he can see that there is a relation between the anapestic movement and the mood of a poem, he has made at least a beginning in understanding the nature of poetry.

The results of this system are on the whole good, especially for the superior student. I believe that the students begin to grope — and perhaps that is a well chosen word — toward responses of their own; and they try to analyze the nature of their responses. There is a respectable number of intelligent questions. The sole criticism offered so far by the students concerns the organization of the text rather than its approach. Some of them have asked for biographical identifications of the poets represented in **Understanding Poetry,** and of course such information is provided when the students request it. To sum the case up: a teaching method based on a modification of the New Criticism seems on the whole to be more effective for this type of course than the old historical-biographical approach.

Recently I have been struck with the fact that the approach of the New Criticism makes itself felt in courses which require a more conventional method. I have in mind a course in English romanticism. It is organized by authors and involves much historical and biographical information of the usual sort. The aim of the course is to reveal what Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others had to say, to discover if possible their significance as writers, and to this end one must provide a large measure of material taken from the older tradition of scholarship. But I have found that I have laid more and more stress on tone, imagery, and mood as means of revealing significances, means quite as important and as interesting to the students, apparently, as the facts of biography and history. This emphasis has not appeared through deliberate planning, but through the teaching needs of the moment. Yet it seems to meet the need for a realization of literature as literature. In this instance, then, historical-biographical scholarship and the new technique of analysis have proved their usefulness as complements of each other.

It must be admitted that the two courses are in poetry, for the study of which the analytical method is peculiarly suited. How effective it would be in a course in the novel or drama, as a consistent technique, I cannot say. But there is adequate ground for the belief that it can, when used with some imagination and insight, leaven the mass of historical fact with which literary scholarship is almost of necessity incrusted. I say "with imagination and insight," because if employed without these two qualities it can produce as much arid pedantry as traditional scholarship ever did. There is, indeed, no escape from pedantry except the imagination and insight of the teacher, and no method can save the dry-as-dust from being what he is. Perhaps that is the real danger of the New Criticism in the teaching of literature — the dependence on salvation from critical and scholarly sins by method for its own sake. By what standard of value shall we assume, for instance, that it is wiser to discuss the function of the metaphors in **Frost at Midnight** than the human situation, Coleridge's own experiences, that lie behind the poem? Both are necessary, and they help to reveal each other.

PAUL E. REYNOLDS
Rhode Island State College

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Committees Do Work

Committees *do* work. There is definite proof of this fact that committees can function and make worthwhile contributions in the work of the English teachers of North Carolina. Their most recent contribution is a Literary Map of North Carolina. It is a pleasingly artistic picture-map drawn in four beautifully shaded colors and featuring over a hundred authors of North Carolina. It is twenty-two by thirty-three inches in size and is available at a very small cost. Its worth is obvious not only for use in classrooms but also for decorations in the library or the den at home.

This map is the work of a committee of the English Teachers Association, which is a part of the North Carolina Educational Association. All those interested in English whether teachers in college, high school, or grammar school may join. Its work is done largely through committees with a Central Committee to make plans and set policies for the whole group. The other committees limit their activities to one aspect of the teaching of English; for example, the Curriculum Committee is concerned only with the courses taught.

Naturally leadership in such a set-up necessarily has to be good. In this instance an alert and enthusiastic Executive Secretary has been the life of the organization; however the other officers and committee members also function capably and conscientiously.

Each year regular meetings are held, parts of which are devoted to committee meetings and to reports made by each committee on its progress. It was at one of these regular sessions in October, 1947, that the idea of making a literary map of the State was presented to the Literature Committee. (The Literature Committee, by the way, a subdivision of the Curriculum Committee, is composed of six members, half high school teachers and half college teachers. Here also is proof that college and high school faculty can work together satisfactorily.) Plans for preparation of the Map were begun immediately. The major task, gathering material about the many writers, was at first done rather haphazardly. Later a list of authors arranged by counties was compiled, and each member was assigned a number of "counties" for his portion of the research work. The information gathered was sent to the chairman who kept a card file containing minute biographies of each author. Most of the work was done individually with the chairman organizing the work and making assignments. Frequently satisfactory conferences were held *via* mail.

Reports were presented regularly to the whole organization; and at our regular meetings such topics as research procedure, problems of selection of authors for the Map, and publication costs were discussed.

In addition to the regular committee members, there were others who assisted in the project. One member of the organization who is a real authority on North Carolina literature became unofficially the chief adviser and often met with the Map committee and was consulted frequently by the chairman. Also various other members, individually as well as the Central Committee itself, helped us by offering suggestions formally or informally at various times. Likewise a high school art student rendered valuable service by drawing, under the direction of the Committee Chairman, the first sketches of the Map, which were submitted to the committee for criticism and correction. So the work continued for almost three years.

Following such formal and informal cooperation, a special meeting was called which was attended not only by the regular committee members but also by the Executive Secretary, the chairman of the Central Committee, and the special adviser. It was there at last decided that the publication of the Map was possible. Plans concerning the employing of a professional artist, financing the project, securing a publisher, and other such items were made at this meeting. These were then submitted to and approved by the Central Committee, who helped to secure money with which to launch the project.

After that, the final list of authors to be featured on the Map was made up and approved by the committee and various other members of the English Teachers Organization whose suggestions for emendation were solicited. At a general meeting also, the list was discussed and approved.

The rest was left to the artist and the publishers except, of course, for routine consultation, in which capacity our special adviser served, since by virtue of geographical proximity and his comprehensive knowledge of the State's literature, he was well qualified.

Clearly this is an excellent object lesson in cooperation. It is evidence of the way a State organization through regularly constituted committees, made up of both college and high school personnel, and considerable informal cooperation when it seems necessary to cross or ignore committee lines, can accomplish an objective in which the association as a whole believes.

MRS. MARY WYCHE MINTZ
Wilmington (N.C.) High School

Spring CEA Meetings April 21, 1951

The spring conference of the New York CEA will meet at Syracuse, April 21. The topic for discussion will be "The English Concentrator and his Vocational Problem." According to Prof. Katherine Koller, regional CEA president, the problem being posed by this subject is this: what does English have to offer a concentrator who does not want to teach? Miss Koller adds: "He often finds it difficult to get a job when he informs a prospective employer that his major has been in the field of English. I think it's a little unworldly of us not to face this problem." As a means of setting the framework for the discussion of this problem, the program committee for the spring meeting of the NYCEA is getting out a questionnaire inviting recipients to take a fresh look at the English concentration as a whole.

* * *

Spring meeting, Middle Atlantic CEA, W. Maryland Coll., April 21.

I've Been Reading

THE ROMANTIC NEW ORLEANIANS by Robert Tallant (Dutton, 384 pp., $4.50)—The French and Spanish history of New Orleans explains why the New Orleanians are called romantic. The "begat" chapters in the book are a little tedious but perhaps necessary. This volume in the Society in American series is not so clever or witty as THE PROPER BOSTONIANS, but it is an interesting history of the people and traditions of a unique city in America. The recent revival of the French Quarter has caused real estate there to skyrocket. J. GORDON EAKER

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Speed Reading at Georgia Tech.

The speed reading course at the Georgia Institute of Technology was first offered in the spring of 1949 and has been increasingly popular. Through the Extension Division the course has also been offered as a part of the adult education program, and during the past summer has been a part of the pre-college program for students wishing additional preparation before enrolling in the fall.

Originally called Remedial Reading, the course was renamed Reading for Speed and Comprehension, a more accurate statement of its function. The course is elective and carries no college credit. It meets for two hours per week for one quarter, with such individual work with machines as the students find time for.

The materials used in the course are the Harvard University Reading Films (Cost $254.00), a text for individual practice (Stroud and Ammons, *Improving Reading Ability*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.), four machines designed to be used individually to improve speed (three Reading Rate Controllers at $85.00 each and one Reading Accelerator at $65.00), Nelson-Denny Reading Tests and other exercises and tests developed here.

The films serve the purpose of uniting the class and of helping to cure regression and to increase the span of words grasped. Each film is followed by a comprehension test. The text offers a variety of exercises to increase recognition and is especially good in stressing comprehension. Its chief failure is in confusing directions, all of which are placed at the beginning of the book. The individual machines allow the student to see clearly his day by day improvement and, since books are also available in the laboratory, give him easy access to reading material. Each student keeps a chart of his progress.

As might be expected, results vary from individual to individual in terms of ability and time and effort given to the course. Since the course carries no credit and only the grade of S or F is given, it is sometimes neglected as the quarter advances and the pressure of other work demands the student's time. Balanced against this handicap is the eagerness of the student at the beginning of the course and his sense of his own need that made him willing to undertake extra work.

Results from a sample quarter are are follows:

	Beginning	End	% Change
Average Speed	273	471	72
Paragraph Comprehension	49.5	50	0
Vocabulary	50	56	12

No student failed to make some improvement. All students learned that improvement was possible.

The course was developed to give the ordinary student an opportunity to develop his reading speed. No attempt so far has been made to deal with the student with special problems. Visits to the Air University at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama, helped us in developing the course and the tests and encouraged us to proceed with a minimum of equipment.

ANDREW J. WALKER
Georgia Institute of Technology

Personals

John Crowe Ransom, editor of "The Kenyon Review," has been named the winner of the annual $1,000 Bollingen Prize in poetry of the Yale University Library.

In addition to Conrad Aiken, the award committee included Robert Penn Warren, W. H. Auden, Leonie Adams and Karl Shapiro. Committee members are not eligible for the award.

Mr. Ransom, told of his selection, commented:

"I am surprised. There is nothing recent of mine for the committee to have considered, and my old work is small in volume when the inferior things are screened out. I know now that when I was writing it I had no sound education in poetry, and was in torture trying to escape from the stilted and sentimental verbal habits which conditioned me. My stuff came out of the academy, I am sure that is apparent.

"Let me add that I cannot feel I am done with writing verse yet, but it will not be exactly more of the same."

(From "New York Times")

T. C. Crenshaw, Texas Christian University (Fort Worth) is program chairman for the annual meeting of the Texas Conference of College Teachers of English, to be held March 31.

Norman Foerster welcomes George Roy Elliott's new book on **Hamlet** as "an honor to our profession."

Samuel Kliger is in Italy on a Fulbright grant.

Balfour Daniels is associate dean at the University of Houston.

California CEA

The spring meeting of the California CEA has been set for March 10 at San Bernardino College.

An article-length review in a forthcoming issue of the *Harvard Educational Review* is to contain a sizeable summary of the fall meeting of the California CEA (Whittier College, Nov. 4, 1950). Charles Cooper, Whittier College, is author of this article. He reports that this was a very good meeting. Albert Upton, Whittier College, presided and "commented with shrewd wit and insight," at sessions in which "four very able papers on General Education were presented by Father Harold F. Ryan of Loyala U., Prof. Philip Merlan (philosopher), of Scripps College, Dr. Clarence K. Sandelin, of L. A. State College, and Dean Franklin P. Rolfe of U.C.L.A. . . . each excellent in its own way." Dorothy Dixon, outgoing regional secretary-treasurer, has called this "by far the finest meeting which we have had."

Prof. Lionel Stevenson, U.C.L.A., is the new president of the California CEA; Clarence Sandelin, L. A. State College, vice president; Sister Humiliata, Immaculate Heart College, Secretary-treasurer.

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The Scholar ...

Continued from page 1

which scholar and ballad singer have been collaborating in a healthy and significant fashion.

Of course there is more to the story. It was hardly accidental that townsfolk were first attracted to folk-music about the time of World War I, or that the present flowering has been coincident with another war and the stormy days that have followed. Evidently our response has been, in one sense, a natural product of heightened national and folk consciousness. North American people have been struggling to preserve their cultural heritage, and what more natural than to turn to their own cultural inner core? Folksong is the voice of the people in the deepest sense in which that phrase can have meaning. It is not class-conscious, or elite, or obsequious, or partisan—just basically and honestly human, an example of a civilized use of language. It was natural, too, in times of stress, that preference should somewhat diminish for the relative shallowness of the hit-parade bag of tricks.

Such a climate of feeling, plus a recently deepened sense of national maturity, must also partly account for the current swing toward native American tradition and away from the old emphasis on the British. Earlier in the century few learned people took cowboy songs and such indigenous products seriously. We have emphatically changed all that. General folksong publications of the past decade are revealing: *Singing America* (1940), *A Treasury of American Song* (1940), and *Folksong U. S. A.* (1947) have gone native almost completely. Record albums and radio programs, sensitive to audience reaction, reflect less extreme, but significant, ratios. The American community, it appears, has lived long enough and successfully enough to have grown into an authentic retrospective veneration for its own legends. Chanties, spirituals, work songs, once a natural part of occupational life, have attained a stature in the imagination that only the passing of time could bring about.

The learned world first got acquainted with folksong through balladry, a fact that provides one explanation of the familiar (and rather exclusive) scholar's dichotomy of ballads, on one side, and other types of folksong on the other. But a further accounting should also be considered. There is some justice in Robert Gordon's reference to ballads as the "aristocrats of the folksong world." To the educated mind the ballad doubtless carries a stronger appeal because of its superior dramatic power, its more objectified content, and its wider variety of subject matter. *Joshua Fit de Battle* is just as vivid a performance as *Lord Randall*, but it lacks *Lord Randall's* strangely modern-looking trick of telling a story by implication, so that the hearer is allowed the pleasure of discovering the meaning for himself. Curious how the ballad makers, following their native avoidance of abstraction, have hit upon devices of narrative technique which in our generation are reckoned as highly sophisticated.

As late as 1922 a prominent critic saw fit to write that "American folksong, as a whole, has been imported from the Old World." We know better today. Thanks to an adventurous past and a heterogeneous population, America is probably richer in folksong than any other nation. Think of the variety. Pioneer songs of the Western trek. Chanties from the seven seas. Musical adventure yarns from lumberjacks, canal men, and railroad builders. Negro work chants whose hypnotic rhythm and powerful expressiveness can never be understood from printed words on a sheet of paper. Love lyrics, some with the delicate charm of *Pretty Saro*, others ironical. Ballads in abundance, some still redolent of Old World atmosphere, some transformed by the new environment almost beyond recognition. Dance tunes, prison and outlaw songs. French Canadian and Mexican melodies with hemispheric popularity. And consider the quality of these songs: the tremendous gusto and vitality of the chanties, the narrative artistry of a great ballad, the passionate intensity of both White and Negro spirituals. The catalog could go on. I list some of the important types only to locate the ballad more visibly in the setting where it belongs. In contemporary America, balladry, both British and native, appears as one surpassingly brilliant strand, but one only, in a rich and highly varied texture of traditional music.

When these matters are duly weighed, does it not seem obvious that ballad study, however brief, ought to include at least some passing attention to the folksong character of the art? After all, here is the means of experiencing the ballad in its true integrity, as it has existed from the mysterious beginning of its long tradition. It seems evident, too, that ballads should not occupy a closed monopoly in our study of folk music and literature. Other types of folksong richly deserve a niche in the academic hall. Viewed genetically, this material is an instructive spectacle, a surviving (if inexact) sample of the forgotten matrix out of which must have evolved all our highly specialized language and musical arts. And the melodies are always intrinsically interesting, sometimes exceedingly beautiful.

* * *

The examination of folksong can hardly be effective without some sort of practical demonstration. How can this be achieved in the classroom? In a variety of thoroughly practical ways. Recordings are one answer. They are available now in convenient album groupings. In choosing the commercial variety, one has to guard against arty or "hillbilly" modifications, or even burlesque. The Library of Congress recordings are, of course, authentic and highly recommendable.[2] For a more ambitious program one might enlist the help of the local Music Department (though any group of vocally able students will do) in presenting a ballad recital, in which solo, dialogue, and choral variations can be used to advantage.[3]

In any event we always have our own voices, such as they are. We should not be disturbed if we have never had singing lessons. Neither have the folk-singers. They rarely concentrate on musical expression. They simply tell you a story in a remarkably effective way. Few of us can reproduce the folk style, with its inimitable intonation and whimsical variations. But a plain, natural presentation is actually pretty effective, and will be received, at first maybe with surprise, but always with respect and appreciation and downright pleasure. Musical ballads are sound pedagogy, and they have an agreeable way of making a bright spot in English 200 or American Literature still brighter.

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1 This work bids fair to herald a new advance in the direction of a native American opera accessible to large numbers of people. See H. W. Heinsheimer's article in the New York Times, May 29, 1949, Section 2, page 7.

2 A catalog may be obtained for ten cents by writing to The Recording Laboratory, Division of Music, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D.C. Album I, "Anglo-American Ballads," is a good selection to begin with. Album II consists of "Anglo-American Shanties, Lyric Songs, Dance Tunes, and Spirituals." Album III of "Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, and Ballads." A descriptive leaflet accompanies each record. The reader may be interested in Howard Taubman's article concerning "Records: from the U. S. Folksong Archive" in the New York Times, April 10, 1949, Section 2, page 6.

3 For a semiconcertized performance, C. J. Sharp's One Hundred English Folksongs (Oliver Ditson, 1916) is authoritative and useful. Sharp's accompaniments, though not nowadays unique in this respect, are composed within the modal scales of the tunes and preserve their archaic flavor. Folksong U. S. A. is excellent for a wide range of native material. Guitar accompaniments are appropriate with some American songs. In any representative recital some ballads should be sung solo and unaccompanied.

JOSEPH W. HENDREN
Western Maryland College

Irving L. Churchill, head of the department of English at Coe College, has been named Dean of the College.

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Notations for the Record

The summer school of English hitherto held at Kenyon College is changing its locale, but not its staff, to Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

The English Department at the Illinois Institute of Technology has a new course—a seminar for English majors primarily, who in regular courses are normally outnumbered by engineers. Samuel Workman is in charge.

A regional conference on general education, November 20-22, was sponsored by Florida State University in cooperation with the Department of Higher Education of the National Education Association.

A program that broadens liberal education is found in the expanded Division of the Humanities at Emory University. The new program, which went into effect as the fall quarter opened, makes possible a general-culture major without specialization.

In September 1950, the University of Notre Dame inaugurated within the College of Arts and Letters a new program—"a general program in Liberal Education—a four-year course of seminars, tutorials, and lectures, with the objective of a general education in the whole tradition of Western Culture, leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts."

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Polylingual Professor Without Portfolio

A leading authority in comparative literature, meeting us at the Statler in December, made two noteworthy comments about the question to be raised at the Annual CEA Meeting concerning his field. (1). When he had read the advance elaboration of the question, he thought how heavily loaded it was against comparative literature. (2). When he had learned who had been invited to discuss the question—Albert Guérard, himself a distinguished comparatist—he concluded we were being fair-minded, indeed.

The fact is, we were simply doing our best to perform a central CEA function—to stimulate frank discussion of issues arising in areas of tension within our profession. The Chap Book Supplement to this CRITIC is further exercise of this same function. Through it, we expand the "audience" to include our entire membership. Further, we provide, below, as a means of recreating the mood within which Prof. Guérard's address was presented, the introduction given by Prof. William Watt, chairman of the meeting.

"Many of us here tonight represent institutions that do not enjoy the luxury of a department of Comparative Literature. The standard catalog advertises one or more departments of foreign languages, ancient and modern, and an indispensable department called English. The language departments are primarily concerned with dispensing a commodity euphemistically called a "reading knowledge" of a foreign tongue. The major industry of the English department aims to teach students to know the best that has been said and thought in the handbooks of composition. At one extreme is the foreign language instructor earnestly dedicated to the dubious proposition that **Immensee** in the original is preferable to **Faust** in English. At the other is the freshman English instructor who, having spent the best years of his life in the graduate school slicing symbolic slivers from the blubber of a white whale, is now entirely occupied putting splints on fractured sentences.

"Most of us who are privileged to teach literature have been nurtured in a single national tradition—French or German, English or American. Thus we English teachers have bravely taught Chaucer without Boccaccio, Spenser without Ariosto, Shakespeare without Sophocles, Milton without Dante, Congreve without Moliere, Swift without Rabelais, Carlyle without Goethe, Emerson without Carlyle, and the whole history of the essay without Montaigne. Some of us have tactfully avoided even a glancing mention of "foreign influences" for fear of being haunted in the pages of a bluebook by Petrarch's **Lives** and Plutarch's lovely Laura. Now, with the curricular fashions decreeing "Humanities" and "Western Civilization," we are embarrassed to recall how many great books belong to neither English nor American literature. Lo, the poor English teacher! He is apparently expected to become the monarch of far more than he now surveys.

"Probably the only satisfactory solution to the dilemma is to augment every faculty, not with insular English teachers or provincial foreign language teachers, but with cosmopolitan critics of literature, polylingual professors without portfolio. The next speaker is the kind of man I mean: Professor Albert Guérard, for many years the distinguished Professor of General Literature at Stanford, now on the faculty at Brandeis University. He has given us a multiple choice of titles for his talk: (1) **English or Literature?** (2) **Dante or Joel Barlow?** (3) **The Quick and the Dead.**"

Both the Smith College Dramatics group and the Playmakers of the University of North Carolina have presented, this season, performances of **The Madwoman of Chaillot.** George B. Dowell was director of the Smith College production.

PERSONALS

Edward Davison has recently spoken before the Poetry Society of America.

Richard Lyons is now instructor in English at the North Dakota Agricultural College. Working with the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, he has begun collecting bibliographical information relative to the literature and, more broadly, the cultural development of North Dakota.

N. Bryllion Fagin, director of the Johns Hopkins University Playshop, has been judge in the Tenth Anniversary Playwriting Contest sponsored by **Plays,** a drama magazine for young people (Boston). Other judges: Betty Smith, Samson Raphaelson, and A. S. Burack.

Denzil Bagster-Collins, formerly at Springfield College, is now at Champlain College, Plattsburgh, New York.

Strang Lawson, chairman of the Department of English at Colgate, is editing a new publication, **The English Record,** organ of the New York State English Council.

Southeastern CEA

About one hundred college teachers of English from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina participated in the first meeting of the Southeastern CEA, held February 17, at Georgia Tech.

Sir Richard Livingstone, vice chancellor of Oxford University, was guest speaker. Nathan Starr (Rollins) was elected regional president; and Edward Foster (Georgia Tech), chairman of the current program committee, was elected regional vice-president.

Louise Hening Johnson is now a member of the English Department at Jamestown College, Jamestown, North Dakota.

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